

# DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

## LEST WE FORGET... RADIO

by DELWIN B.  
DUSENBURY

## ANALYZING THE PLAY

by DONALD T. OLIN

## PERIOD FURNITURE AND HAND PROPS— GREEK AND ROMAN (Part 1)

by CHARLES R.  
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\*This scene is published separately as a one-act play under the title "Recognition Scene From Anastasia," at 50 cents a copy. (Royalty, \$10.00.)

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1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Editor, Leon C. Miller, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Managing editor, Leon C. Miller, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Business manager, Leon C. Miller, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

2. The owner is: The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; National Director, Doris Marshall, Helena, Mont.; High School; Asst. National Director, Maizie G. Weil, Senior High School, Upper Darby, Pa.; Secretary and Treasurer, Leon C. Miller, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Senior Councilors, Blandford Jennings, Clayton, Mo.; High School; Doris Adley, South Kitsap High School, Port Orchard, Wash.

3. The known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

Leon C. Miller, Editor and Managing Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of September, 1956. (Seal) E. Michael Reitman, Jr. (My commission expires November 5, 1958.)

# DRAMATICS

(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespian Society, an organization of teachers and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools)

MEMBER OF THE EDUCATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Address: Dramatics, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio

\$2.50 Per Year

Volume XXVIII, No. 2

50c Per Copy

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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| One year subscription—Foreign ..... | \$3.00 |
| One year subscription—U.S.A. ....   | 2.50   |
| Canada .....                        | 2.75   |
| Single copy .....                   | .50    |
| Back issues, per copy .....         | .50    |

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DRAMATICS is published monthly (eight times) during the school year at College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, by the National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio. Dates of publication: Oct. 1, Nov. 1, Dec. 1, Jan. 1, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, April 1, and May 1. Doris M. Marshall, National Director; Maizie G. Weil, Assistant National Director; Leon C. Miller, Secretary and Treasurer; Blandford Jennings, Senior Councilor; Doris Adley, Senior Councilor.

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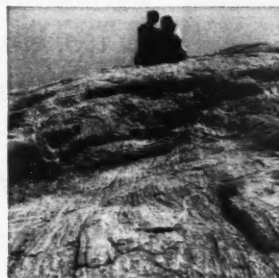
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## 1956 — REGIONAL CONFERENCES — 1957

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| ARKANSAS               | Arkansas State College, State College, Marie Thost Pierce, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 301, Marked Tree High School, April 20, 1957.   |
| FLORIDA                | University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida High School Drama Festival, November 16, 17, 1956.   |
| FLORIDA (Central)      | Bartow High School, Charles R. Trumbo, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 728, March 2, 1957.   |
| MICHIGAN               | Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, Margaret Meyn, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 455, Benton Harbor High School, March 16 or 23, 1957.  |
| NEW JERSEY             | Highland Park High School, Gertrude Patterson, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 805, March 30 or April 6, 1957.   |
| NEW YORK               | State University of New York Agricultural and Technical Institute at Alfred, Myrtle Paetznick, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 364, Jamestown High School, and Robert Timerson, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1286, Trumansburg Central High School, May 3, 4, 1957. |
| OKLAHOMA               | Central High School, Tulsa, Iona Ballew Freeman, Sponsor, Troupe 817, Program Chairman; Maybelle Conger, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 822, Central High School, Oklahoma City, April 27, 1957.  |
| MONTANA                | Senior High School, Helena, Montana, Doris M. Marshall, National Director and Sponsor, Troupe 745, February 14, 15, 16, 1957.  |
| PENNSYLVANIA (Eastern) | Wm. Penn High School, York, Margaretta Hallock, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 520, March 16, 1957.   |
| PENNSYLVANIA (Western) | Indiana State Teachers College, Jean E. Donahey, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 187, Brownsville, April 6, 1957.  |
| TENNESSEE              | Grove High School, Paris, Ruby Krider, Sponsor, Troupe 198, Program Chairman; Dorethe P. Tucker, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1310, Central High School, Columbia, November 17, 1956.   |



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\*Al Trescony, M-G-M, one of scores of Hollywood talent scouts, casting directors, actors' agents who regularly cover Playhouse productions, chats during a rehearsal with Toni Gerry, former Playhouse student, now a featured film player.

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**A**S HAS been the custom for many years, the names of the Best Thespians of the past school year are published in the November issue of DRAMATICS as a national recognition of the students selected for these honors by their local troupes. The list is compiled only from the annual reports submitted to National Headquarters by the respective troupes. Not all of the 1674 affiliated schools are represented for the following reasons:

1. Several schools submitted no annual reports.
2. Several schools submitted annual reports, but *too late* for publication.
3. Several schools do not select Best Thespians.

May this national recognition prove a real incentive for even better, cooperative work throughout this current school year to all active Thespians in their own local school theaters! Anything less is not worthy of Best Thespian.

—O—

**P**ATTERNED partly after the medieval pageant wagons, the Pied Pipers of Albuquerque troupe their theater for children in a station wagon to the elementary schools and summer recreation centers under the guidance and direction of Stan Rarick, Albuquerque, N. M., High School. Here is a true story of teen-agers at work and play. More remarkable, Mr. Rarick's Children's Theater is a co-operative high school theater venture, not a project of one school. Our Children's Theater article this month will amaze you — and offer to all Thespian affiliated schools a daring challenge.

—O—

**T**O ANCIENT Greece and Rome travel we this month to learn about their furniture, lamps, tableware, and other accessories. One often reads and hears of the grandeur of the Greeks and Romans, but their manners are another question. Mr. Trumbo makes it quite clear that to the ancients "fingers came before forks." And they reclined on couches around the dinner table!

—O—

**I**N PLAY selection Mr. Olin suggests that all directors read all available reviews and criticisms before final decisions are made. The real value of this procedure is that the reviews will point out the weak spots as well as stress the effective scenes. Likewise, the director will learn what characters must carry the play to its successful conclusion.

—O—

**A**CCORDING to Dr. Dusenbury the basic values of microphone training are as follows: training in voice and articulation, developing a sense of pause and timing, stimulating imaginative visualization, and the technique of rapid multi-characterization. Thus the microphone and radio drama will always be an integral part of the educational theater. Radio dead? Don't ever believe that!

—O—

**D**R. BLANK presents four additional plays of the month; Prof. Friederich continues his brief-viewing; but our Thespians stop chattering for only this issue, as the Best Thespian Honor Roll takes precedence.

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# As I See It . . .

## CHICAGO, HERE WE COME!

THE 1956 Speech and Theater Convention, sponsored primarily by the American Educational Theater Association and the Speech Association of America, will be held at the Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, from December 26 to the 30 inclusive. The following sectional meetings will have direct appeal for all secondary school teachers: Speech-Teaching Speech in High Schools, Demonstration Teaching Lessons, First Aids for the High School Speech Teacher, Speech Jobs and Teacher Supply; Theater-Student Guidance in the Educational Theater, Training and the Use of the Voice in the Educational Theater, Is the Girls' Drill Team a Substitute for Theatrical Performance in a High School? What Is the Place of Drama in High Schools? Can We Produce Teachers for Theater Arts in High School? Increased Enrollments-Boom or Bust for Theater Arts? The Student Director in the Educational Theater, The High School Teacher-Director. I wish I could list others, but here should be enough to whet your appetites. Shall we meet personally in Chicago?

## GROWING, GROWING, GROWING!

FOR THE 12th straight year school and college enrollments have shown an increase. The 1956-57 total figure for both public and non-public schools stands at 41,553,000. Major breakdown: Elementary, 29,618,000; secondary, 8,111,000; higher education, 3,232,000.

## HERE'S WHY!

IT IS quite apparent that young married people are deciding a two-child family is not enough; nor is one having 2.7 children. The trend is definitely toward the three- and four-children family circle. As a result the population of the United States is now increasing at

the rate of 7,200 persons a day. This means that by 1960 the population would rise to 177,000,000 and by 1965 to 190,000,000.

## ADMISSION TO COLLEGE

TRADITIONALLY, the suggestion for filing applications for college was in January of the 12th grade year. Today, however, college officials recommend students file applications at the end of the junior year or soon thereafter. Rather early than too late!

## AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT

ELVA R. Reid, Sponsor, Troupe 222, Nampa, Idaho, Senior High School, authors the following:

"Four days prior to the scheduled presentation of our Thespian three-act show, *Marcheta*, I was hospitalized with double pneumonia. With several last minute details tantamount to a finished production still not polished and finished the cast at first experienced a real sense of panic. But, guided by an ambitious student director, Deanna Peterson, they agreed to carry on. They did carry on the three-act play to a successful presentation, while I suffered in more ways than I care now to remember in my hospital bed. Thespians of that calibre are an asset to any drama department."

## THANK YOU, MISS HAAGA

AGNES Haaga, University of Washington, who was one of the four members of our excellent Board of Experts at our Sixth National Dramatic Arts Conference, said the following about the conference in the CTC Newsletter:

"Here were a thousand students from 35 states all involved in drama, and so much of it done outside of school hours - an extra activity for students and teachers-these teachers and sponsors are truly dedicated persons, and we in CTC should do everything possible to help them, because they are really interested in Theater for Children and in Creative Dramatics."

## ONWARD TO NEW HEIGHTS

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## 1955-56

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| 1 David Noonan          | 88 Carol Heiskell           | 164 Anne Swany         | 242 Betty Peters          | 326 Lee Dormaier       |
| 2 David Llewellyn       | Dixie McNeill               | 166 James Martin       | Patty Raines              | 330 Bruce Williams     |
| 3 Gary Adams            | 89 Stanley Cooke            | 168 Mindy Ande         | 245 Joey Bingham          | Jerry Jorgenson        |
| 4 Margo Barling         | 90 Anna Carol Astin         | 173 Patricia Morgan    | 246 Carl Robinson         | 335 Brenda Salmick     |
| Donald Livingston       | 91 Gerre Bullard            | 174 Patricia Hardy     | 248 Wilma Burrell         | 338 Linda Williamson   |
| 5 Charles Sapp          | 93 Howard Richert           | 177 Marian Riecken     | Marian Rahonce            | David Dozier           |
| 6 Judy Parker           | 94 Gail Gieyold             | 180 Delbert Willison   | Jim Dewar                 | 339 Carol Tracy        |
| Janet Zearfoss          | Ronald Anderson             | 183 William Willeford  | 250 Dean Lybbert          | Vera Ferris            |
| 8 Gwen Johnson          | 95 Donald Mosee             | 184 Annabell Ratliff   | 251 Susan Barber          | Judy Grosjean          |
| 10 Charmaine Smith      | 96 Helen Wolfgang           | Jane Kidd              | 253 Dean Moore            | Malcolm Litwiller      |
| 12 Arlen Brouchous      | 98 Marlin Beckwith          | 185 Phyllis Smith      | Carolyn Flesher           | 340 Draxie Horn        |
| 14 Colleen Conner       | 98 Robert Snyder            | Gloria Day             | 254 David Sousa           | 342 James Wagner       |
| 16 Dick Childress       | Jay Hern                    | 186 David Orr          | 255 Richard Sanders       | Larry Gordon           |
| 20 Margaret Ann Ensley  | 99 Glenda Hammer            | Robert Brown           | 256 Kaye Angerbauer       | 343 Hazel Secrist      |
| 21 Paul Abbott          | James Brewster              | 187 Gail Adams         | 257 Judy Dubinsky         | John Davidson          |
| Judy Shuler             | Flo Ann Sours               | 189 Christine Barrett  | Herbert Skuba             | 344 Jack Barkley       |
| 22 Gwen Ellis           | Dan Mustaine                | Thomas Copley          | 258 John Collins          | 347 Anne Sandberg      |
| 23 Berry Younger        | 101 Jackie Carl             | 190 Peggy Weller       | Don Busby                 | 349 Bob Tate           |
| 24 Deanna Daniels       | 103 Warren Miedke           | Pat Schneberger        | 259 Judy Stein            | 350 Dan Doyle          |
| 26 Evonne Flaa          | 104 Janet Seymour           | 191 Don DeZutter       | Myles Rodehaver           | 351 Bernard Rosman     |
| 27 Melinda Morris       | Audrey Westfall             | Roxanne Russell        | Kay Barnette              | Lois Pat Anderson      |
| Michael Sutherland      | Bruce McEwen                | 192 Michael Cooper     | Billie Mae Bourne         | 352 Karen Bofferding   |
| 29 John Lutz            | Joyce Libman                | Patricia Lofton        | Nancy Davis               | 353 Neal Hollingshead  |
| 31 Theresa Cernosek     | 106 Morag Holman            | 193 Jo Ann Trulik      | Paul Pruett               | Jan Case               |
| 32 Thomas Lynch         | 108 Joseph Rubin            | 195 Leroy Hood         | 261 Mary Wacholz          | 356 Patricia Porter    |
| Raymond Pittenger       | 109 Arlene Chesler          | 197 Larry D. Reynolds  | Elizabeth King            | 357 Janice Rains       |
| 33 Edward Spisak        | 110 Sandra Snyder           | 198 Helen Kimmons      | Nancy Lowe                | Shirley Kelly          |
| 34 Ruth Ann Burns       | 112 Bob Kuzelka             | 200 Anne Taylor        | Judy Rich                 | 358 Rita Joseph        |
| 35 Bruce Cayard         | Tom Ingham                  | Dee McKnight           | 263 Elaine Hummel         | 359 Harold Cannon      |
| Sandra Jenkins          | 113 Mike Juetten            | Paul Bolarsky          | 264 Elizabeth Miller      | 360 Norma Jean Frazee  |
| 36 Ralph Greenup        | 115 Gary Johnson            | 202 Danny Cook         | 265 Ahnawake Unger        | 361 Patricia Madison   |
| Judy Rose               | 116 George Crawford         | 205 Natalie Helms      | Walter Spadone            | 362 John Renner        |
| Fred Reif               | Jeanne LaDuke               | John Hazleton          | 271 Jon Thorpe            | 364 David Holmlund     |
| Charlene Richards       | 118 Jo Ann Mackey           | 208 Pat Elliot         | Patty Branstetter         | 365 Barbara Gordon     |
| 37 Roger Zents          | 119 Milton Maeasch          | Ken Jennison           | Tony Izzi                 | Graham Thatcher        |
| 38 Jerry Snowberger     | Annette Stern               | 209 Dallyce Dee Davis  | 276 Jane Rosenberg        | David Smith            |
| Richard Powell          | 121 Joseph Edward Griffiths | David Schmidt          | Betty Goldblatt           | Lou Mazza              |
| 39 Nancy Greaves        | Patricia Ann Miller         | 210 Fred Steele        | 277 James Bateman         | 368 Rosemary Griesmer  |
| 42 Caudis Hicks         | 122 Wilham Dangler          | Jane Paramore          | Paulette Braden           | 369 Barbara Seelman    |
| 45 E. T. Laird          | Henry Good                  | 211 Judy Retzloff      | 279 Frederick Alan Smith  | 370 Frank Beaman       |
| 46 Nancy Becker         | Jane Penn                   | Jean Goehring          | Burldena Roberts          | 371 Lois Lubke         |
| 47 Stuart Melchert      | 124 Jo Ann Hungerford       | 212 Anna D'Micha'is    | 280 Richard Orofino       | 372 Janet Gress        |
| Bob Cressler            | Mary Strachan               | Joan King              | 281 Mary Ellen Parsons    | Carolyn Murphy         |
| 51 Gary Diehl           | 126 Virginia Adanes         | 213 Margaret Kaehler   | 283 John Murphy           | 373 Richard Saltford   |
| 52 Dorral Campbell      | Barbara Schmidt             | John Lantz             | 284 Ann Bryan             | 374 Julia Granskie     |
| 54 Nancy Lemley         | Clifford Wilderman          | 214 Jacqueline Freeman | 285 Mark Christensen      | 376 Shirley Brennan    |
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| 60 Ken Durr             | 138 Virginia Puig           | 221 Janet Aydelott     | 295 Rzella Snook          | 388 Danny Wilkerson    |
| Gary Prather            | Jimmy Springer              | Roger Inman            | 297 Charles Wigal         | 389 Iris Harper        |
| 61 Ned Ramsey           | 140 James Wade Smith        | 222 Carole Rossman     | 298 Douglas Shires        | Thad Houston           |
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| Sue Divan               | 141 Peter Conarty           | 223 Carl Koerner       | 299 William Harvey Kemman | 392 Barry Martin       |
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| Shirley Rhodes          | 142 Carol Babb              | Jerry Langford         | Robert Wicker             | 393 Jacquelyn Lebo     |
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| 66 Symma Winston        | 143 Carole Crandall         | 226 John Harrison      | Bill Thompson             | 395 Maxine Firkins     |
| David Stilwell          | Emery Hinkston              | 227 Frank Pfaff        | 302 Annette Youngblood    | Ronald Tomlin          |
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| 73 Peter B. Glen        | 153 Henry Brooks            | 231 C. Thomas Wolpert  | Ken Locher                | 401 Romelle Brucker    |
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| 76 Nancy Joan Beardmore | 154 Jerry Moore             | Murno Bobo             | Peter Shays               | Maceo Knight           |
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| 79 Rozalind Swezey      | Kay Henderson               | Barbara Burnie         | 313 Larry Winter          | 405 Darlene Ceer       |
| Nancy Harpey            | Bob Hurley                  | 234 Beth Fellers       | Benita Hume               | 406 Patsy Whitson      |
| James Stoffel           | 161 David Wharmby           | 236 Judy Kirkland      | Ralph Neill               | Nancy Keesecker        |
| 83 Margot Begley        | 162 John Patten             | 238 Hamilton Girard    | Velma Jacobs              | 407 Pearl Reed         |
| 87 Gary Miller          | Joy Watkins                 | 239 Rebecca Pierce     | 316 Anne Ault             | Dorothy Enochs         |
| Mary Camklin            | Judith Rood                 | Jackie Blair           | 317 Darrell Rice          | 411 Donald Muzyka      |
|                         | 163 Richard Stouffer        | Nancy Dix              | 322 Sally Deutsch         | Margaret Kennedy       |
|                         |                             | Bob Jones              |                           | (Continued on page 19) |

**R**OMAN furniture was so largely derived from the Greek that we may regard it as practically one and the same. Thus in this article and the one to follow the words *Greek* and *Roman* are really synonymous.

Greek chairs were of several kinds. Some were without backs, and some were made to fold up. Others had backs but were either with or without arms. The chairs were not upholstered, but cushions were used if desired. The legs and flat surfaces of the more costly chairs were often inlaid with silver, tortoise, or ivory.

Tables had either three or four legs and were of light and graceful structure, but were used only at mealtime when they were carried in with the food. They apparently were used for no other purpose, for even writing was done upon the knees instead of on a writing table. These tables were often elaborately carved, such as the legs, in the shapes of dogs springing up, and table edges showing a band of lions pursuing stags.

Couches played a great part in Greek furnishings. They were either beds or sofas, the latter being used for ordinary reclining or by the men at their dinner parties. They were a little higher than the tables so that the right hand could reach down easily to pick up the food. In the homes of the rich they were elegant in shape and were of bronze or wood. The flat surfaces were much inlaid with the legs decorated with silver or ivory. The bed part consisted of a frame with canvas or leather thongs stretched from side to side. On this was laid a mattress stuffed with flock, pillows filled with wool or feathers, and coverlets of wool or skins, dyed purple or other regal colors. On the other hand, the poorer

homes were content with truckle-beds, mats, or canvas bags stuffed with leaves. Beds in the homes of the rich were narrow and had decorated head and footboards. The supports at the extremities of the couches have been found to be in the shape of medallions representing busts of satyrs and heads of mules, also heads of the mythological character Medusa and ducks respectively. Many such supports terminated in the shape of the head of a horse or a mule.

#### PERIOD FURNITURE AND HAND PROPS

Stools were designed with straight legs and with curved ties; they had no arms or backs. True, carpets were unknown, but a few rugs and curtains were not uncommon. Carved and inlaid chests served as wardrobes and plate-safes, and also as seats.

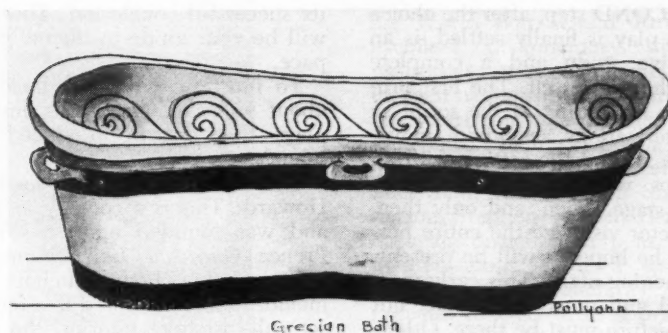
Other articles of furniture consisted of braziers, used for warming and for the burning of perfumes. Lamps either hanging by chains or placed upon stands, baskets of various shapes and colors, hand mirrors of polished bronze or silver and earthenware—all were ornamental pieces.

Candelabra were chiefly of bronze, but cheaper ones in more ancient times were made of wood. These stands were used either for the support of wicks floating in an oil-bath or for lamps. Oftentimes the cheaper wooden candelabra would turn into one blazing candle. Many of these consisted of a base in the form of three legs or paws, very often those of lions, a tall stem, and a circular support or spreading arms for the lamps at the top. Another example of a Roman candelabra of the sixth century B.C. is one with four spreading arms for hanging lamps, and a pin for raising the wicks, with the head in the form of a gryphon. Another is that in terra cotta consisting of a female figure supporting a lamp with three nozzles.

Some of the bronze stands of the Roman are noted in regard to the decoration of the shaft, which often took the form of a climbing animal, such as a panther, a cock, or a bearded serpent. One ingenious expanding Roman bronze

lampstand had the central rod attached to the circular lamp-support so that it could be raised at will and secured in place by means of a bronze pin passed through one of the pairs of holes pierced in the side rods.

The Roman lamps were mostly of terra cotta or bronze. The essential parts were the well for the oil and the nozzle for the insertion of the wick. The well formed the body of the lamp and was fed from an opening above. In the



Grecian Bath

Pollyanna

## GREEK and ROMAN

(PART 1)

By CHARLES R. TRUMBO

bronze lamps this opening was covered by means of a lid, sometimes hinged, and sometimes secured by a chain. The nozzle generally took the form of a projecting spout, but the arrangement varied considerably in different lamps, and a single lamp was often furnished with several nozzles, even as high as twenty.

Lamps could either be simply placed on a candelabra or else suspended from it. Several bronze lamps had chains for this latter purpose. A peculiar bronze hook was sometimes used in the Roman period for hanging up the lamps. They were sometimes hinged to the lamp in such a way that the lamp could be carried or suspended at will. A very primitive form of lamp of the pre-historic period known as Mycenaean consisted of a thin sheet of bronze with a spout and contained oil upon which a wick floated. Numerous Graeco-Roman bronze lamps showed a variety of form. Heads of Seilenas, Pan, negroes, etc., were seen along with a fir-cone, a foot, duck, or a wolf. The handles often terminated in an animal's head such as that of a horse, dog, lion, or a swan. The cheaper terracotta lamps were freely decorated with designs taken from daily life or mythology. One is known to have been made in the elaborate form of a ship with numerous holes for wicks.

A peculiar variety of clay lamps belonging to a later Greek date and found mainly in Sicily and on the North coast of Africa was that with a central tube for fastening on to a spiked support.

(Continued on page 30)



Roman Brazier

Pollyanna

**T**HE SECOND step, after the choice of the play is finally settled, is an extensive study and a complete analysis of the play itself. The first procedure is the re-reading of the script so that characterizations are vivid, movements are clear, and the setting with all its properties will fit the dimensions of the local stage. Then, and only then, can the director visualize the entire performance as he hopes it will be presented on the opening night. This early visualization will and must be flexible, but the overall picture must be there. Otherwise, the director is doomed for failure in the eyes of his cast, his administration, and his audience.

In making a complete study and analysis of the play, the director ought to be aware of all available criticisms and reviews of the play. Occasionally, in the description of the play found in the catalogue or in the playbook itself, there may be brief statements written by reviewers. The value of these reviews is probably negligible, for it would not be good business for publishers to include adverse criticisms. Better still, if other schools which have already presented the play are listed, one can write directly to them for information concerning reactions of cast, school and community.

The greatest aid in looking for reviews and criticisms of a play is the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Most of the reviews appear in magazines that are kept in the bound volumes of your local libraries. To find the play listing for which you are searching, it is more expedient to look under the author's name because that is the way they usually appear in the Reader's Guide.

If the play was produced professionally, one will be able to find reviews easily. These reviews are of real value, for they will point out the weak spots, as well as the effective scenes of the play as a whole. They will also stress the characters that must carry the play to

its successful conclusion. These reviews will be your guide to theme, mood, and pace.

To illustrate what can be discovered about some plays, let us inspect two plays that can be produced by high schools.

*The Late Christopher Bean* by Sidney Howard: This is a comedy in three acts and was founded upon a story called *Prenez Garde à La Peinture* by the French author, René Fauchois. The cast includes four males and five females, the set calls for one interior, the costumes are modern. *The Late Christopher Bean* was one of the outstanding successes of the 1932-33 theater season.

#### REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

## ANALYZING the PLAY

By DONALD T. OLIN

Briefly, its plot centers around a family of New Englanders who have, years before, given refuge to an artist. The play opens years after Bean's death. His paintings have become much in demand and are of considerable monetary value. However, Abby, the family servant, holds all the canvases that are around the Haggett household. The best of these paintings Abby refuses to sell, because as it is eventually discovered, she had been married to Christopher Bean.

By glancing at the frontispiece page of the script, one finds that the first performance of *The Late Christopher Bean* was on October 24, 1932, at Ford's Opera House, Baltimore. The New York opening performance was at the Henry Miller's Theater, October 31, 1932. With these dates in our possession, we are

now ready to go to the library and look through the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature for the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933.

The listing found under Howard, Sidney C., for *The Late Christopher Bean* reads as follows:

Adaptation of *Prenez Garde à La Peinture* by René Fauchois; criticism, *Commonweal* 17:75 N 16 '32; *Nation* 135: 484 N 16 '32; *Catholic World* 136: 335-6 D '32; *Arts* D 38-50 Ja '33; *Theatre Arts Magazine* 17: 18 Ja '33.

To see how these articles in the periodicals might help a director to understand the script, let's take a look at parts of what appear in the first three of these magazines mentioned. The first was the *Commonweal*, weekly review of literature, the arts, and public affairs. On page 75 of the November 16, 1932, edition, the following comments were made:

This particular play happens to be Mr. Howard in his best vein, sympathetic, resourceful, gently ironic, and overflowing with keen observation. His exaggerations are those of the theater . . . The play is an unusual treat if you are looking for entertainment of a non-sensational order.

In the November 16, 1932 edition of *Nation*, the headline on page 484 was "More Than Clever." This was the lead for *The Late Christopher Bean*.

*The Late Christopher Bean* is about as good as an unpretentious play can be . . . It is as a matter of fact, so extremely slight that it might very well seem thin if it were not so skillfully written and so admirably played. . . . But anyone who does not find it, nevertheless, a delightful evening in the theater is someone whose palate has been dulled by the rank flavors of our stage until he is unable to appreciate an ingenious comedy seasoned with wit and insight.

About Sidney Howard himself, the article stated:

Actors, directors and critics alike recognize his unusual gift for putting together scenes which "go" in the theater . . . One of his scripts is a delight not only to audiences, but also to all those who have struggled to project over the footlights.

Part of what the article stated about characters was:

Good as the play is, it would not be half as good without Miss Lord as the maid, Walter Connelly as the head of the family and Beulah Bondi as the accretulous mother.

In *Catholic World* of December, 1932, the following was given as part of the review:

Here at last is the play for which we have all been watching; amusing, interesting, original and sexless. . . . The result is Down East comedy shot with the iridescence of French wit. . . . But like all good comedy, there is profound philosophy and strong emotional content below the line.

From these three reviews, we can tell that this play appears to be very well written. It offers no deep message and should be played primarily for *entertainment!* The characters can be interesting and the parts of Abby, Dr. Haggett, and his wife have to have strong people in the parts. The play was written in 1932, and from the reviews appears to hold true today. From the *Catholic World*,

(Continued on page 28)



Books and Crooks, Troupe 467, Burnham High School, Sylvania, Ohio, Margaret C. Fairchild, Sponsor.



Radio actors in action in the WRTI studios of Temple University demonstrating the sense of imaginative visualization — a basic element of all acting.

**"NORMAN CORWIN?** — never heard of him!" This response to the identity of one of America's finest radio writers comes as a startling revelation of the decline of the radio theater. To those of us who recall the emotional impact of his *On a Note of Triumph*; the delightful fantasies, *Mary and the Fairy*, *The Odyssey of Runyon Jones*, and *The Plot to Overthrow Christmas*; the poetry of *Ann Rutledge*; and his experimental plays, *Seems Radio Is Here to Stay* and *Anatomy of Sound*, it seems unfortunate that Mr. Corwin whose dramas demonstrated the potential power of the radio theater has become the "Vanishing American." Lest we forget completely the significance of the radio theater, let us examine briefly its history.

Due to the confusion of the early days of radio broadcasting in the United States, dates and events are often obscure. As far as research can determine, the first broadcast of a play occurred in August, 1922, when WGY Schenectady, presented *The Wolf*, a full-length drama. This broadcast was followed by a series of radio adaptations of other successful Broadway plays. In 1923, WGY offered a \$500 prize for the best original script, and although the number of listeners was extremely limited in those days, some 300 scripts were submitted. In the meantime WJZ New York had presented the first broadcast of a stage play when microphones were set up on the stage of the Cort Theater during a performance of *Merton of the Movies*. But as Chester and Garrison report in their comprehensive text on radio and television, "the efforts to transplant stage plays to the air without any adaptation to radio resulted in programs little short of the grotesque." For the listener it was like sitting in the theater blindfolded. Thus if radio drama was to gain an audience, original material would have to be written expressly for it. As early as 1930,

"First Nighter," a series of thirty minute unit dramas, was inaugurated as "the first strictly dramatic radio program."

As the number of radio sets increased and national network broadcasting came into existence, the NBC Radio Guild (1928) and later the Columbia Radio Workshop (1936) were established. The latter was re-organized in 1937 under the spirited direction of William Robson with these stated objectives: 1) to present experimental drama techniques, 2) to emphasize drama as a cultural factor, and 3) to encourage original plays and music. The success of this effort was demonstrated with the broadcast of the

**RADIO AND TELEVISION  
ACTING AND PRODUCTION**

## LEST WE FORGET... RADIO

By DELWIN B. DUSENBURY

first verse play written expressly for radio, *The Fall of the City*, by the Pulitzer Prize poet, Archibald MacLeish. Many other provocative dramas by new writers made the Columbia Radio Workshop a significant milestone in the development of the radio theater.

At the same time the National Broadcasting Company offered a series of Shakespearean adaptations, cycles of plays by George Bernard Shaw and Eugene O'Neill and in 1938 introduced a series titled "Great Plays," which continued every week for several years. NBC also commissioned Maxwell Anderson to write a series of thirty minute verse plays which did not add much to his literary reputation. In addition to these "big name" series, the evening radio menu included many popular dramatic programs dealing with history, crime, mystery, adventure, the West, and the family of which only a few have survived the invasion of television. The "soap opera and cliff-hanger" type of serial filled the daytime dramatic playbill.

During the period immediately preceded

ing World War II and during it, many excellent documentary dramas were written as a part of informing the public of their responsibilities during wartime and clarifying the conflict in political ideologies which was taking place. Some of America's foremost writers, Robert E. Sherwood, James Boyd, Sherwood Anderson, Stephen Vincent Benet, William Saroyan, turned their pens to the radio theater along with a generation of younger writers, such as Arch Oboler (second to Corwin as a prolific and effective radio dramatist), Arthur Laurents, Millard Lampell, Ranold MacDougall, John Latouche, and Arthur Miller. Many of these radio dramas offer excellent reading and are worthy of production today. A list of some of the anthologies in which they will be found along with other superior radio scripts is given at the conclusion of this article.

In February, 1940, Norman Corwin noted in *Theatre Arts*:

Radio is such a young medium, . . . its techniques are still developing, its form slowly jelling, its literature is only lately hatched.

Sixteen years later, however, a television comedian brought down the house with the line, "Remember radio?" But has radio suffered a premature demise?

A recent survey published in *Broadcasting-Telecasting* (August 6, 1956) shows that "the 36 year history of commercial radio has put receivers into 45 million homes and signals over 98% of the population." At the present time there are 2,877 standard AM radio stations and 521 FM stations on the air.

As to the incidence of radio drama in the weekly program schedules of the radio networks, CBS leads with thirty hours of drama each week, NBC offers 21½ hours, Mutual 11½ hours and ABC 9½ hours. This tabulation, prepared by David Woods for an article titled "Is Radio Drama a Dying Art?" (*Today's Speech*, September, 1955), includes both the daytime serials and the evening "series" dramas, such as "Treasury Agent" (MBS), "Biographies in Sound" (NBC), the revived Columbia Workshop (CBS), and others. The oldest of the daytime serials is "The Romance of Helen Trent," which according to *Time* magazine "has threaded her perilous way toward true love for 15 minutes per day, five days a week, fifty weeks a year for the past 23 years." The daily audience is estimated at four million listeners.

While a local daytime drama program on a local station may not command so large a listening audience, many local stations have a very satisfactory audience during the day. If a school is for-

(Continued on page 27)

## Director with Imagination, Training, and Devotion Develops Unique Project

IT IS the contention of this department that the hope of a fine, coordinated Children's Theater in America may well be the product of high school leadership (but it must never be misunderstood nor your editor misquoted that he advocates CT for high schools in the place of adult theater, but rather in addition to that phase of work.)

Just a few directors with the imagination, training, and devotion of Stan Rarick, Albuquerque High School, New Mexico, spotted in various corners of the United States, could soon work miracles. According to Tom Erhard, publicity director for Albuquerque schools, Mr. Rarick "participated in everything possible in dramatics in Goodwell, Oklahoma, High School, then took everything in dramatics that was offered at Panhandle A & M College in Oklahoma, and since his joining the faculty of Albuquerque High School has been doing graduate work in theater at the University of New Mexico. He is an active member of the Children's Theatre Conference, and has been president of the speech and drama section of the New Mexico Education Association. . . ." Mr. Erhard further says, "from about 2:00 p.m. on any day in the year the most typical picture of Rarick is in his old paint-spattered pants, working busily with a gang of dedicated boys and girls in his dramatic classroom or adjoined work room." (No, Mr. Rarick cannot devote his whole time to high-school theater; he teaches three classes of American history, in addition to his class in dramatics and stagecraft; nor does he have ideal equipment: Mr. Erhard says, "Rarick's stagecraft gang year after year produce excellent work in spite of the antiquated auditorium.")

Mr. Erhard is admirably fitted to carry on the fine publicity work of the dra-

matics project. . . . He is public relations director for a system of 67 schools with an enrollment of 40,000. His monthly publication, The Albuquerque Public Schools Journal, was judged "tops" in the nation in June. He holds his master's degree in English from the University of New Mexico, and is studying there for his Ph.D. in dramatic literature. So, we shall let Mr. Erhard tell in his own graphic fashion the story of "The Pied Pipers of Albuquerque."

"Flocking around the station wagon, the grade school children hooted, 'Go on home. Get out of here. We're gonna' get you!'

"Clustering outside one window, they grabbed at the hat of a costumed teenager — the villain in a children's play. But as the car pulled away, the teenagers exulted, 'Another smash hit!'

"Albuquerque High School's children's theater, one of the few in the nation bringing drama to the children, judges each performance by this belated audience reaction. 'When they hang around and insult the villain, we know

## THEATER



FOR

## CHILDREN

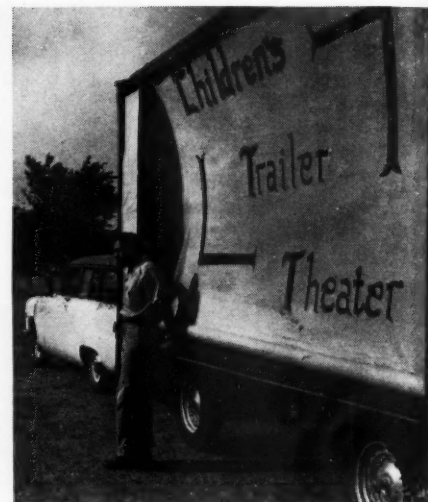


FRIEDA E REED

the performances were good,' says Mr. Rarick.

"This Southwestern theater, patterned partly after the medieval pageant wagons, has enabled thousands of children in this widely-spaced city of 170,000 to see many free productions staged especially for them.

"A few years ago children's theater in Albuquerque's school system was almost dormant. An occasional performance at



Stan Rarick, trailer theater director, welcomes the children waiting on the playground after school.

the high school auditorium drew a few hundred children from nearby. Now, with the trailer, many of the 40,000 public school children see theatrical performances through all but a few mid-winter months.

"During spring and fall, students from all three public high schools combine to produce late afternoon plays on the elementary school playgrounds. In the summer Rarick and the same crew, sponsored on an all-day basis by the recreation department, tour the playgrounds.

"High school students are eager to work with this activity. Actors give not one or two but more than 20 performances of each play, sometimes thrice daily in the summer. Not only is this educational, but it also creates the aura of the long-run professional theater.

"The 'theater' is a flat bed trailer, easily towed. A wooden beam and muslin body is light and lends flexibility to set design. The stage, only 8x16, has two wings each two feet deep, one leading to an outside back door. The roof is open, and a roll-drop curtain permits a maximum of playing space.

"Interested in promoting children's theater and in giving his students more experience, Rarick decided five years ago that viewing must be made easier in this mushrooming city spread over many miles of desert.

"Working with Vic Izay, producer-director of Albuquerque's New Vic Players, Rarick began by carting scenery into a few grade schools where his Albuquerque High students performed. Children enjoyed these plays, but staging was difficult.

"Next step for this youthful veteran of collegiate dramatics in both Oklahoma and New Mexico was renting a trailer for one season. Seeing the potential, the school's recreation director Charles Renfro purchased a truck bed for Rarick and enlarged the program to include all three high schools.



Playgrounds offer plenty of "orchestra seats and standing room" when Mr. Rarick arrives with players and trailer.

# THEATRE SCENECRAFT

by VERN ADIX

Foreword by Arnold Gillette

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350 drawings  
40 photographs

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THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRESS

CLOVERLOT

ANCHORAGE, KENTUCKY

"The school shop built the framework, and Rarick's stagecraft class added the finishing touches. I'm the first to admit it's not original," Rarick says. "If it worked in medieval days, we certainly can improve on it today."

"Despite enthusiastic reception by thousands of children and critical acclaim by the New Mexico Speech and Drama Association and the national Children's Theatre Conference, the trailer theater is not yet flawless.

"Problems range from acoustics and scripts to human frailties. Cast members,

from three widely separated schools, must hurry to Albuquerque High after school and get into costume and makeup in less than half an hour or the show will start too late to keep children on the playground.

"Casts are limited to those who can fit into Rarick's station wagon, which also carries the smaller props. Larger props and scenery are tied to the trailer; the curtain must be tightly furled with rope lest it blow away.

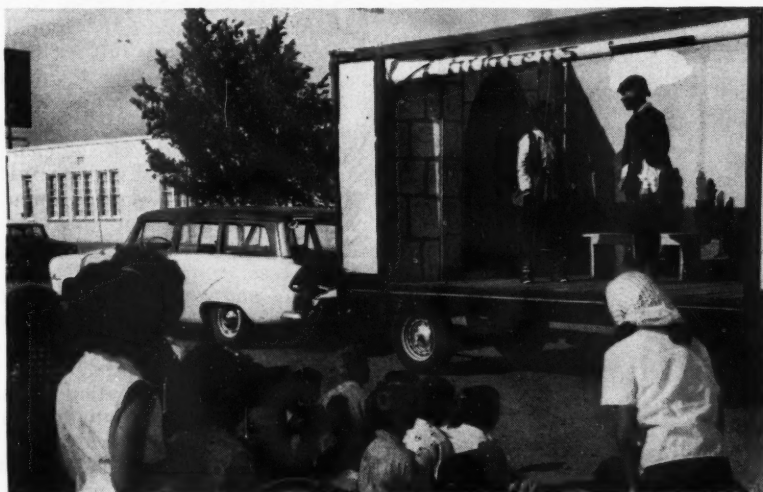
"Plays are selected and adapted with care. Rarick prefers one-act versions of

familiar fairy tales. The group adapts almost every play, with either Rarick rewriting or working closely with his more advanced students. In justifying his use of the one-act play for this trouping project, Rarick says, "We accentuate the comic and dramatic effects, get the fundamental story across, and bring down the curtain." After staging the same play for 20 different audiences, both cast and director know what interests the children. This knowledge helps in later adaptations.

"Recent productions have been *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Pied Piper*, *King Midas*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The King Who Wouldn't Be Fooled*, and *Puss in Boots*.

"Although staging is tricky because of limited space, outdoor hazards, such as windstorms and the noise of airplanes passing overhead, the compensations far outweigh the problems. For the high school student the experience is rich. Performing often, they learn to work under pressure. "We usually have only about a week to cast and rehearse each play in the summer," Rarick said, "and when we're giving three performances daily in different parts of the city, everyone has to work together on a split-second schedule." Reward for this task is the exuberant appreciation shown by the younger audiences.

"Educators approve of students from the three high schools co-operating on (Continued on page 26)



This scene from *Puss in Boots* shows Albuquerque's trailer theater in action.



**On Borrowed Time**, when produced by Troupe 1417, Benson Polytechnic High School, Portland, Oregon, Robert Bonniwell, Sponsor, created the need for this tree which was immediately "grown" by members of the troupe.

### ON BORROWED TIME

Benson Polytechnic H. S., Portland, Oregon

**T**HIS CATCHPHRASE, "A Tree Grows in Benson!" accompanied most of our advertising when a huge apple tree did grow last spring for Mr. Brink (Death) in Paul Osborn's *On Borrowed Time*, a highly challenging, worthwhile, and successful production. Both adult audience and student body alike were lavish with their praise and enthusiasm for the staging and acting of this show.

The demands and requirements of this show are readily obvious — a huge industrious production crew, and excellent character actor (Gramps), and a clever grade school youngster (Pud). With these ingredients it is safe to go ahead with rehearsals and be rewarded by a satisfying and exciting presentation in which all participants display a constant growth and gain not afforded by all undertakings.

Planned and initiated by our Thespian Troupe, the setting was begun with the construction of the apple tree framework

in the carpentry shop. Since our stage is large, the dimensions of the trunk (constructed of 2x4 and 4x4) were 4 feet high and 4 feet wide at the base, tapering to 3' 6" at the top. Three of the basic limbs were 4x4 lumber about 14 feet long bolted securely to the trunk frame. The "dead" limb on which the boys sit and swing was also a 4x4 bolted and braced to one of the heavy basic limbs. The tree began to take shape with the addition of round wooden disks, diminishing in size from 20" down, with 4" slits cut in them and covered with chicken wire attached with a stapling gun and stretched about two-thirds the circumference of each disk. It was discovered that most of the supplementary branches should be added after the papier-mache is applied in order properly to space them after the overall shape of the tree is visible. One complete covering of papier-mache was found satisfactory. Quite large burlap strips and patches were glued and sewed to the trunk and limbs followed by a complete sizing of the entire tree with a spray gun

## PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Edited By EARL BLANK

which tightened the looser areas and brought out the irregular shape of the wire foundation underneath. Many real branches of all sizes and shapes were inserted through holes in the burlap and nailed to the 4x4 beneath using the open portion of the limb left uncovered at the back. The entire tree including the smaller branches was then sprayed with a coat of brown paint.

The leaves were constructed by sizing and painting muslin which was then cut into 2½" strips, accordion-pleated, and run through the buzz saw using patterns of different sizes and shapes. Wire was attached to each leaf. Apples with stems were dipped in wax, and wired to the smaller branches together with the leaves. The final touches were then added by accenting high and low spots on the trunk with different colors and shading on a gnarled and coarse appearance. The result — a sturdy, practical, yet attractive apple tree able to withstand quite a beating during final dress rehearsals!

The remainder of the stage decoration can be immeasurably enhanced through the addition of potted plants on the porch, and artificial sweet peas of varied colors fastened on vines along the lattice, over the screen doors, and on the picket fence along the front of the house. Artificial yellow and red roses and Oriental poppies placed in earth in front of the porch in two or three places add further color and realism to the set.

ROBERT BONNIWELL  
Sponsor, Troupe 1417

### FAMILY CIRCLE

Los Angeles, Cal., Catholic Girls' High School  
Assisted by the Drama Club of  
Loyola High School

**O**UR CHALLENGE was to find a play that would satisfy popular demand for comedy yet present high dramatic standards. Luckily, Cornelia Otis Skinner's *Family Circle* provided easy staging, snappy dialogue, a touch of romance, most natural teen-age characterizations, plus "Shakespeare without Tears"! The plot developed around Cornelia's choice between home life with Charlie and career life with the Dramatic Muse.

For the single parlor set required, our regular backdrops sufficed, but visible through the backstage wall door could be seen a student-painted mural — including a pictorially floating swan. The latter was meant to accentuate Cornelia's "dying swan" interlude.

For costumes six student seamstresses cut colorful silk rayons and crepes from 1955 long-waisted pattern designs. For



Photo by Christy-Shepherd, Hollywood

**Family Circle**, Troupe 361, Catholic Girls' High School, Los Angeles, California, Sister M. Consilia, Sponsor, 1954-55.

**FAMILY CIRCLE  
GRAMERCY GHOST  
ON BORROWED TIME  
DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY**

instance, in one scene Mrs. Skinner and Cornelia wore identical 1920-like modes of forest and (truthfully) Kelly greens respectively to achieve a mother-daughter effect which in turn raised no audience comment whatsoever! Praise, however, was high for complimentary color blendings and for clever 1920 accessories of flower clusters and bead strands.

At intermission our glee club sang Franz Schubert's difficult renditions of Shakespeare's lyrics. And into the 1920 setting of Act II Shakespeare was hilariously transported in the riotous wrestling match scene from *As You Like It* and in the gay-spirited allusions to *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Finally, we had a unique curtain call. To avoid an audience departure before our orchestra's concluding 1920 number, the tragic and comic masques were gradually shadowed on the back curtain. Beneath these shadows the cast reassembled on an open stage for a party in pantomime to celebrate Cornelia's climaxing renunciation of Charlie in favor of a theatrical career. Then midst fading masques, departing dance couples, and a bowing Cornelia, applause proved that our play this year was taken to the hearts of the audience as never before.

SISTER M. CONSILIA, I.H.M.  
Sponsor, Troupe 361

**GRAMERCY GHOST**

Franklin High School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**GRAMERCY GHOST** by John Cecil Holm is a fanciful comedy, which proved delightful to our high school cast and audience. Nancy Willard, young and attractive, lives in a charming old



**Death Takes a Holiday**, Troupe 733, Community High School, Wood River, Illinois, Richard Claridge, Sponsor.

house near Gramercy Park, New York. Her 103 year old landlady dies, and wills Nancy — a ghost, Nathaniel Coombes! Nancy sees Nathaniel, but no one else can. Her stuffy fiancé, Parker, wants to bustle her off to a rest home when she tells of the mysterious Nathaniel, but personable young newspaperman, Charley Stewart, believes Nancy does see a ghost. Nancy finally sees the light, and Nathaniel finally gains admittance to heaven.

We painted Nancy's living room a lively blue, giving it a stipling effect of old rose, using a commercial roller-coater with a modern design. Ultra-modern furniture was used, accompanied by modern art pieces, brass wastebasket, planters, and wall plaques. Secret niches for Nathaniel's mysterious entrances and exits were achieved by breaking the walls of the set, and setting the down-stage section about a foot ahead of the "up" stage. A corner book nook on a

**PUBLISHERS**

Family Circle, Dramatic Pub. Co., Chicago, Ill.  
**Death Takes A Holiday**, Samuel French, Inc., N. Y. C.  
Gramercy Ghost, On Borrowed Time, Dramatists Play Service, Inc., N. Y. C.

slightly higher level, set back from the rest of the set provided other such openings. A large French door, right, opening onto a brick-walled porch, enhanced the set.

Whistling the tune "Yankee Doodle," Nathaniel announced his own entrances, and the audience soon caught on, and happily anticipated the arrival of Revolutionary-clad Nathaniel each time the whistled tune was heard.

What a wonderful time our audience had laughing with Nathaniel and his cronies, yet wistfully wishing he were "real" so that he might have won the lovely Nancy.

MARGARET G. MEYER  
Sponsor, Troupe 468

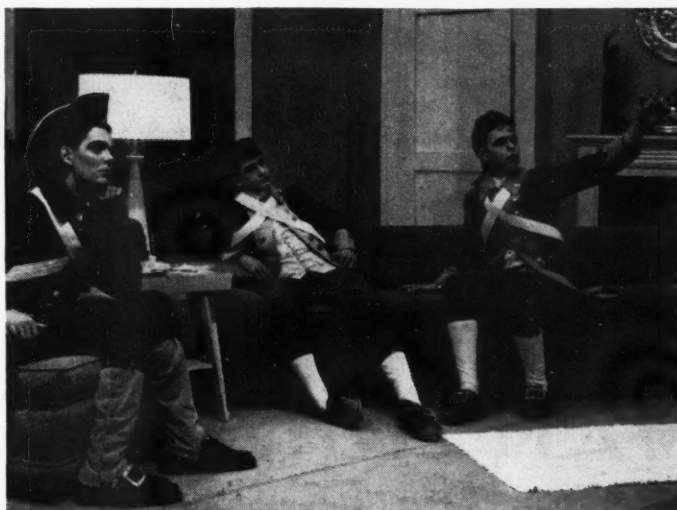
**DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY**

E. Alton-Wood River, Illinois, High School

**PRODUCING** a fantasy, and a serious one at that, is always a risky business at the high school level. Casting problems are often tantamount to failure at the start, technical aspects are usually too difficult for high school technicians to handle, and audience response is often negative. However, sometimes it pays to be different. The play, *Death Takes a Holiday*, has been a favorite of this director for a long time. Moreover, because of the particular group of actors available, and because our audiences had been most receptive to our past play programs, which ranged from melodrama, *Night of January 16th*, to light opera, *The Merry Widow*, to serious comedy, *Stage Door*, we decided to take the plunge and do the beautiful fantasy, adapted from the Italian of Alberto Cas-sella by Walter Ferris.

With the exception of two relatively small parts, the two servants, each role is an actor's dream and offers a fine opportunity really to lose oneself in a part. Prince Sirki (Death) has tremendous speeches as does Duke Lambert. Only very capable young actors can expect successfully to portray these parts. Ronnie Mullen and Bob Zacny, who played these roles in our production, turned in two of the finest acting jobs the director of the play can remember seeing in ten years of play directing on the high school level. The roles of Grazia (in our production played by a freshman appearing in her first major production), Princess de San Luca, Corrado, Alda, Rhoda, and Eric demand a particular sensitivity in portrayal because the numerous emotional scenes might otherwise get out of hand. Fortunately, we were able to cast the play just about as perfectly as anyone working in high school theater might expect. The majority of the actors were seniors who had been in one or more plays, and each was

(Continued on page 25)



**Gramercy Ghost**, Troupe 468, Franklin High School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Margaret G. Meyer, Sponsor.

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FATHER OF THE BRIDE

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

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For Mom, Dad, Sis, and Brother.*

### CHANGING CHANNELS

**CBS-TV** — Jackie Gleason is back — live and with a format similar to his original show. Thus we shall once again see our old friends: The Poor Soul, Reggie Van Gleason, The Loudmouth, The Bartender, and of course The Honeymooners. Skipper is happiest about The Golden Ham's reversion to live shows — aren't you?

**CBS-TV** — Arthur Godfrey promised us a new show this year. I would imagine so — the wonderful McGuire Sisters, Pat (Friendly Persuasion) Boone, and Jan Davis are the only "oldtimers" left. If you think about it, that's really all he needs for a very good show. By the way have you ever heard the record Mr. Godfrey made some years ago called *I'd Give a Million Tomorrows*? Skipper would like to hear him sing it again — this time with the McGuires.

**NBC-TV** — Sid Caesar now rounds out this network's Saturday evening of top entertainment. How can they go wrong? Perry Como, Sid Caesar, and George Gobel—all in a row. The very capable Janet Blair fills in quite nicely the spot vacated by Nanette Fabray in the Caesar show. Did you know that Sid once played the part of a sailor in a movie in which Miss Blair co-starred? Carl Reiner and Howard Morris are back too, and Skipper prophesies that Mr. Caesar will undoubtedly enjoy another successful season. Best of all — so will we.

**NBC-TV**—Need I mention Sunday night's answer to NBC's prayer? Steve Allen has done well in holding down this most important entertainment time spot for his bosses. I'm happy to see that Steve has kept in general the format of his *Tonight* show. The only gripe any of us could voice is the same old "why do the networks insist upon conflicting this show with the *Ed Sullivan Show*?" Ah well, Skipper will watch Steve, the Boss will watch Ed, and we'll eventually hit a happy medium.

**CBS-TV**—*Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal*, the season's best new series in Skipper's estimation, will please each of you I'm sure. Much good sense, apprehension, fulfillment, joy — all are here in this fine portrayal of the everyday experiences of a skilled surgeon and more important of his gradual re-acceptance of life's responsibilities after his wife's untimely death leaves

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him embittered toward the world. Don't get me wrong. This is neither a sob story nor a "soap opera." This series makes good sense!

### BROADWAY LINE-UP

**ALVIN THEATER**—*No Time for Sergeants*, Andy Griffith. Comedy.

**AMBASSADOR THEATER**—*Loud Red Patrick*, Arthur Kennedy, David Wayne. Comedy.

**ANTA THEATER**—*Middle of the Night*, Edward G. Robinson. Drama.

**BARRYMORE THEATER**—*New Faces*. Musical Revue.

**BELASCO THEATER**—*Too Late the Phalarope*, Barry Sullivan. Drama.

**BROADHURST THEATER**—*Auntie Mame*, Rosalind Russell. Comedy.

**BROADWAY THEATER**—*Mr. Wonderful*, Sammy Davis, Jr. Musical comedy.

**CORT THEATER**—*Dairy of Anne Frank*, Susan Strasberg. Drama.

**HELLINGER THEATER**—*My Fair Lady*, Julie Andrews, Rex Harrison. Musical comedy.

**MAJESTIC THEATER**—*Fanny*, Billy Gilbert. Musical drama.

**MARTIN BECK THEATER**—*Major Barbara*, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Charles Laughton, Burgess Meredith. Comedy.

**NATIONAL THEATER**—*Inherit the Wind*, Paul Muni. Drama.

**ROYALE THEATER**—*The Matchmaker*, Ruth Gordon. Comedy.

**ST. JAMES THEATER**—*Pajama Game*, Julie Wilson, John Raitt. Musical comedy.

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**TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON**, comedy, Marlon Brando, Glenn Ford, Eddie Albert. (MGM)

**FRIENDLY PERSUASION**, drama, Dorothy McGuire, Gary Cooper. (AA)

**SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS**, drama, James Stewart, Sheila Bond. (WB)

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(Continued from page 8)

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| Harry Horn             | Wilden Webb            | 507 William Sumner     | 557 Kurt Borows        | 601 James Jeffers      |
| 413 Richard Spears     | 455 Jerry Bellenger    | 508 Carol Torgerson    | 560 John Lancaster     | 603 Virginia Valesio   |
| Allan Kohlwes          | Richard Petruschke     | Angeline Owen          | 561 Sandra Dieterich   | Burke Liburt           |
| Bea Marie Busch        | 458 Janice Marie Young | 510 Martha Van Zele    | 562 David Teitelbaum   | 605 Bobbie Patterson   |
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## PLAYS OF THE MONTH

(Continued from page 15)

capable of lending a suggestion of sophistication that the play requires. The actors were smitten with the play at the beginning and rehearsals were as happy an experience that this director ever hopes to have in the educational theater. Our various stage crews found the play as compelling as the actors, and the creation of the essential prop, the "Lamp of Illusion," captivated everyone.

With the assistance of our Art Department, we had a fine set, suggesting the palace of Duke Lambert, done in sombre tones of green and rust to help create the proper mood and atmosphere for the play. Our room also suggested spaciousness. Costumes were carefully selected, elegant dinner dresses and smart casual wear for the girls, appropriate tuxedos and formal dress for the boys.

We knew in the beginning that *Death Takes a Holiday* would be an expensive show with the high royalty, costume rentals, the right set which we needed to construct, but our prime interest was not to make money. We wanted to have one of the finest productions we had ever presented at the East Alton-Wood River Community High School. As a result, we put our hearts and souls (not to mention "Blood, sweat, and tears") into this production. Audience response to a well-organized student advertising campaign was heartening. According to the reception our audience gave this play, we certainly achieved our goal.

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## Christmas Plays

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Reverent depiction of the origin of "Silent Night, Holy Night." By Aileen Sargent. 2 M., 2 W., tableaux characters, and choir. Easily staged. Price per copy: 50c. Royalty, \$5 per performance.

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### SHELTER FOR A WANDERER

This deeply moving Mexican play-pageant has been produced annually by the famous Padua Hills Theatre for many years. It embodies, as an integral part of the plot, the three main Christmas customs of Mexico—the nacimiento, the breaking of the pinata, and the litany of Las Posadas. By Agnes Emelie Peterson. 8 M., 5 W., extras if desired. Music included. Price per copy: 50c. Royalty, \$5 per performance.

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A Nativity play with music. By Janet Katherine Smith. For those groups seeking a more elaborate and spectacular undertaking. 14 M., 8 W., choruses, and extras. Plays about 1½ hours. Books 75c each. Royalty \$10 per performance if admission is charged or a collection taken. \$5 per performance when no admission is charged.

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A spoken cantata for a verse choir of any number. By Albert Johnson. Price per copy: 50c. No royalty if 10 copies are purchased.

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The faith of a crippled child produces a modern miracle. For four men, one woman, plus parts for a child, angels, shepherds, carolers. By Agnes Peterson. Price per copy: 50c. Royalty, \$5 per performance.

### AT THE FEET OF THE MADONNA

A deeply moving pageant of supplication for six women plus speaking and singing choirs. By Charlotte Lee. Price per copy: 50c. Royalty, \$5 per performance.

For further information on Christmas plays, write for the Row-Peterson Drama Catalogs—either for high school or for junior high school.

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## TRAILER THEATER

(Continued from page 13)

a school project. Arch-rivals athletically, the students learn to work together. Several strong inter-school friendships from the drama work have helped to cement relationships among the turbulent teenagers.

"Because of the large repertoire and use of one-acts, individual stars are not created. More students can participate, and widely different characterizations, such as animals and monsters, are possible. One year a midget at school was able to take an enthusiastic part in extra-curricular activities by participating in several plays. He became an immediate favorite with the young audience.

"One parent from a neighboring town, aware of this therapeutic experience of participating in a venture of this kind, begged to have her son admitted to the trailer theater crew even though he lived 25 miles away and attended school in another county.

"Trailer theater has yet to reach its peak in Albuquerque. Rarick and his students are brimming with ideas for improvements and expansion. First will come a metal framework and a masonite

exterior, both for permanency. Eventually, still borrowing from the medieval pageant wagons, they plan to add a trap door. The final touch will be the distinctively brilliant paint job so that all Albuquerque can recognize the trailer theater.

"Rarick is eager for other groups to try this device and points out that a trailer stage may often be the best way of bringing all kinds of theater into the rural areas. 'Children are our future patrons and actors,' he says, 'and in addition to entertaining them, we begin to cultivate their tastes.' This cultivation has already begun to show in Albuquerque, for students flock to drama classes and clubs in the three high schools.

"Despite the headaches of taking their theater all over the city, the trailer crews are more enthusiastic than ever as their unique theater develops more each year. The high school student needs only to drive slowly onto a playground and see myriads of children eagerly shout and run after his caravan to realize that he too can play Pied Piper to thousands of happy youngsters."

In these days of persistent front-page lurid accounts of teen-age delinquency

and blackboard jungle activity, what better counteractant in the name of dignity of youth can we have than such a story as the preceding one? Here we have a thrilling account of artistic growth in a co-operative high school theater venture, and the providing of fine entertainment for upwards of 40,000 elementary-school children in one calendar year!

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### Inspiring Speeches by

Dr. Frank Whiting, President of AETA: According to Dr. Whiting, no theater worker should be discouraged if the press, radio, and television fail to recognize his work in the flamboyant headlines accorded major sports events. He suggested that if there had been these media in the Golden Age of Greek Drama, the major plaudits would have gone to the Olympic games. . . . And had there been the "mass media" in the Elizabethan Age, the plays of Shakespeare would probably have been relegated to the obscure corner reserved for the arts, and the games would have been given first-page coverage. . . . Moral: Work for the satisfaction and joy of achievement and excellence.

and by

Dr. Clarence T. Simon, Northwestern University: Dr. Simon said that Children's Theater has now "come of age," and it is time to evaluate it and look for honest answers to the questions: What have we done? How good is it? Where are we going?

### Excellent Productions

by Robert Moulton, University of Minnesota: Mr. Moulton and a group of his students presented "An Evening of Dance Theater." Especially fine on this program was the inspired choreographed short version of *Cinderella*, *The Happy Birthday*, which was a series of dance interpretations of nursery rhymes, and a magnificent capsule version of *Our Town* called "... something eternal."

and by

The Hull-House Children's Theatre: *The Red Shoes*, an adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's story under the direction of Hans Joseph Schmidt. This production was a fine indication of what can be done by and for settlement-house children by the oldest settlement house in America.

and by

The Equity Library Children's Theatre of Chicago: *Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater* by Martha Bennett King. Much could be learned from this production about the use of pantomime and grace of movement in children's plays.

and by

The Ballet Celeste, San Francisco: Another fine dance program demonstrating artistically what can be done in this area for children's entertainment.

### Especially for High Schools

The High School and Children's Theater was a discussion panel composed of four high-school directors (all Thespian sponsors): Chairman, Wallace Smith, Lakewood, Ohio; Mabel Henry, Wilmington, Delaware; Freda Kenner, Messick High School, Memphis, Tennessee; and Richard Johnson, Barrington, Illinois. In this discussion the emphasis was upon the values of CT for high-school producers. The ideas developed by the panel, out of their wide experience in CT as well as in other types of high-school theater, centered around the values of this medium for the high-school actor and the values to the community.

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## ... RADIO

(Continued from page 11)

tunate enough to be able to offer a weekly radio drama series during the day, an audience is available for it. Directors of dramatics and their students will find many stimulating and rewarding moments in the production of radio scripts in the anthologies listed at the end of this article. Bringing these scripts to life in the classroom with the tape-recorder, over the school public address system or in the studios of the local radio station will offer invaluable training for theater students. Parenthetically, it should be noted, however, that radio scripts like most plays require royalty payments if publicly performed.

The specific techniques of radio drama production will be discussed in subsequent articles; however, it is necessary first to discuss the basic values to be gained from microphone training in general. They are 1) training in voice and articulation, 2) developing a sense of pause and timing, 3) stimulating imaginative visualization and 4) the technique of rapid multi-characterization. While others may be added, generally, these four values can be readily recognized as of invaluable assistance in developing student actors for the stage as well as for radio and television.

The microphone functions somewhat as a microscope in its power to magnify the voice. With the removal of all detracting as well as enhancing visual aids, the actor is dependent upon his voice and his voice alone for the proper effect. Articulatory deviations previously unnoticeable can now be detected and consequently corrected. Too much release of air on certain sibilant sounds ("s" and "sh") can be perceived immediately, especially when a velocity (ribbon) or a crystal microphone is used. Both of these microphones are constructed so that the portion which receives the vibration of the sound waves is very sensitive to extreme releases of air. In the case of plosives ("p" and "b"), the microphone will accentuate the fault of an over-release of air.

The microscopic microphone is helpful in discerning an unusually fast rate of speech. Most beginning actors have difficulty in decreasing the rate of delivery, but as a result of carefully marking one's radio script, the rapid reader or speaker can be made extremely conscious of the need for slowing down or accelerating the rate. A secondary aid, but nonetheless important, may be noted in the use of the script marking or "mark-up." The "mark-up" is a technique unique to radio in that it can actually be utilized during the performance. Marking or underlining sounds that must be watched, words or groups of words to be emphasized and marginal reminders as to rate of speech served as omnipresent aids to the student at the microphone while he is actually present-

ing his material. It must be emphasized, however, that it is only a technique or an aid to better reading and speaking. There must be the establishing of proper speech habits without the aid of a script "mark-up." The "mark-up" is only a step in the training of good voice.

The "mark-up" also provides an excellent technique of calling attention to the proper sense of pause and timing. In radio groups of words are more important than any single word. Groups of words can be carefully marked so that the student develops a habit of proper grouping.

The training in imaginative visualization is vitally important to the stage actor as well as to the electronic thespian. The need for seeing objects, persons, and action off stage from one's position on stage occurs in every play. The absence of costumes, properties, scenery, and all the other basic adjuncts of a stage presentation require the actor at the microphone to heighten the imaginative sense of visualization. If the actor at the microphone is to sound convincing, he must be convincing at the microphone. Facial expression and total bodily activity are always stressed in the radio drama, but the actor's imagination is put to the extreme test in effectively transmitting to a blind audience the complete visualization of the dramatic scene.

A final value to be gained from microphone training is the need for quick characterization through voice. The danger of veneered or glib characterizations is obvious. Still, the dominance

of the clock in the rehearsal, presentation, and programming of the radio drama does not permit actors to develop a character over a period of several weeks. In most instances a few hours is the case. The quick change from a normal voice to a nasal or a guttural vocal quality gives the actor training in vocal flexibility which can be of invaluable aid in a program of vocal training.

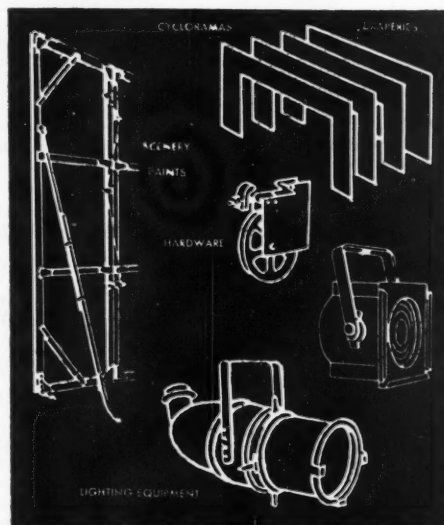
All of these techniques provide exercise and practice in the skill of using the voice and developing the imagination. Lest we forget then the microphone and the radio drama are of supreme importance and must be an integral part of the educational theater program.

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## ANALYZING THE PLAY

(Continued from page 10)

we note that this should be very excellent high school material just as it is written.

Other inferences could be drawn by each and every individual director. Only part of the reviews were given previously and there was more valuable material in them. It is well worthwhile to read all the reviews and criticisms you can find about the play you are going to direct.

The other play is *Growing Pains* by Aurania Rouverol. It was written approximately at the same time as *The Late Christopher Bean*. It is also a three-act comedy with one interior set and modern dress. It calls for a cast of eight men and ten women. This play offers a large cast, thus giving more students an opportunity to participate. Its theme is a new and old fashioned slant at unsophisticated youth as it flutters uncertainly on the wings of sixteen.

Again, referring to the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, we find two reviews. They were in *Commonweal* of December 8, 1933, and *Catholic World* of January, 1934. Just by picking out excerpts from each of these reviews, we will gain a deeper understanding of the play.

From *Commonweal* we learn:

It is innocent enough little comedy that came blushing its adolescent way into New York last week rejoicing in the title of *Growing Pains*. I am going to admit right off that I liked it, and enjoyed some parts of it hugely, in spite of the fact that one nearly always knew what was coming next, and of the further fact, as a comedy of the early teens, it lacked much of the facility for which Tarkington once and for all set the standard. . . . Nevertheless, I insist that it is a thoroughly worthwhile little comedy which displays with no small ingenuity some of the common problems which parents must solve by wise silence, aspirin, a plentiful supply of handkerchiefs, a small cash reserve, and infinite patience.

Briefly, from *Catholic World*, we find that *Growing Pains* "a reverberation of *Seventeen* is heard in this amicable little comedy . . . were *Growing Pains* a little less self-conscious its humor would be funnier."

From the parts of these two reviews, we find that again the play is of no magnitude but can be entertaining to an audience and that it should be played for its comedy value rather than for any "message."

After reading the reviews and criticisms one must now re-read the play carefully for the third time with this new point of view in mind. Again, visualize the play as you would direct it. Note in your mind the changes you have already made from the first time you visualized the play.

As a director, you are now ready for your next step in preparing your play for production — you are ready to prepare your prompt script with all your blocking and notes on pointing of lines.

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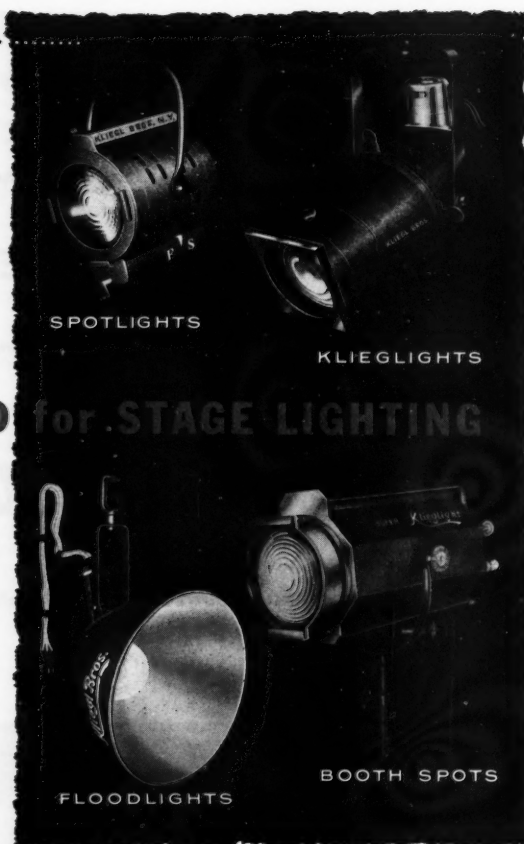
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### GREEK AND ROMAN

(Continued from page 9)

Lamp fillers closely resembled the lamps themselves.

Besides lamps, lanterns were also used, especially for outdoor purposes. Such a portable Roman lantern was cylindrical in shape and had a hemispherical cover which could be raised from the body of the lantern. The body was enclosed with plates of some transparent material, such as horn, bladder, linen, or talc. Bladder was a cheap substitute for horn. This may have been the type of lantern carried by the wise and foolish virgins as mentioned in the Bible.

For mirrors the Greeks and Romans were at a disadvantage. Glass articles were known, but were not in common use. The ordinary type of mirror was a sheet of burnished metal. However, a very few genuine looking glasses as we know them today were in existence. The metal mirrors were of two distinct forms: a circular reflector, mounted on a handle like a modern hand-glass, and a similar disc enclosed in a folding box. Both of these varieties were often decorated with engraving, and the handles were sometimes modelled as statuettes. Some were decorated with such designs as the Dionysos standing by a vine, the head of Nero, and a palm tree.

In early Greek and Roman times cooking was done either in the courtyard of the house or in the principal living-room. The houses in Pompeii were, how-

ever, generally provided with separate kitchens, small rooms, opening off the court. The hearth was a simple rectangular structure of masonry, sometimes furnished with projecting supports for holding vessels over the fire. The kitchen implements, as a rule, did not differ greatly from those in modern use, except that they were made of bronze, and frequently had some graceful ornamentation. Pans either rectangular or circular with as few as six circular depressions or as many as twenty-eight were used for baking or poaching eggs. Small terracotta moulds were used for stamping flat circular cakes into such designs as a wicker basket containing bunches of grapes and a pomegranate. There were amphorae (jars or vases with large egg-shaped bodies, narrow cylindrical necks, and two handles) for holding wine, and bronze frying-pans with a spout at one corner. Frying was done with oil. There were also ladles whose handles terminated into beautifully modelled heads of an animal, such as that of a duck, swan, or a dog; and there was a peculiar implement with a broad flat blade that may have been used for lifting fish off a pan.

Plates of Campanian fabric decorated with fish and other marine animals painted upon them such as a sea-perch, a sangus, a torpedo, a red mullet, a bass, and a cuttlefish are believed to have been intended for the serving of fish, and that the circular depression in the center was meant to hold any water that might

strain off. Strainers were used for clearing wine and other liquids and were often of delicate workmanship.

Knives and forks were not used at the table, fingers being mainly employed. Spoons, however, were common and those of an early period were large ivory spoons with elaborately ornamented handles. Small spoons in bronze or ivory, with a round head and handle running to a point, are believed to have been used for the eating of eggs and the extraction of snails from their shells. Snails were a favorite dish with the Romans, and the spoon got its name "cochlear" from being used in this manner.

Fish, bread, eggs, walnuts, and fruit are known to have been eaten by the ancient Romans, and if eggs were eaten, surely the flesh of fowl was also certainly eaten.

The kneading of dough was sometimes done on a board placed in a circular trough on three legs. It is interesting to know that the kneading was sometimes done to the sound of a flute.

One needs only to study the furniture and everyday utensils of the Greeks and Romans to understand more fully their mythologies. In the homes of the rich and the poor there was one common denominator — their religion. Whether it be an elaborate couch of the wealthy or a lamp in the kitchen of the lowly, here one found in their designs the grandeur of these two ancient countries.



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major, a strange little man who claims his car overturned in a drift, and a feminine jurist who makes life miserable for everyone. Into their midst comes a policeman, traveling on skis. He no sooner arrives, than the jurist is killed. Two down, and one to go. To get to the rationale of the murderer's pattern, the policeman probes the background of everyone present, and rattles a lot of skeletons. But in another famous Agatha Christie switch finish, it is the policeman — or, rather, the man disguised as a policeman — who shoulders the blame. Chalk up another superb intrigue for the foremost mystery writer of her half century.

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**PATRIOTIC PLAYS AND PROGRAMS** by Aileen Fisher and Olive Rabe. 1956, Plays Inc., 418 pp.

This anthology includes 20 plays, 7 playlets, 11 group readings, 5 spelldowns, and 14 recitations all aimed at youngsters in the elementary or junior high school brackets. Subject matter covers a multitude of items: ideals, such as religious freedom, freedom of the press, honesty, citizenship, etc.; famous historical characterizations, such as Lincoln, Haym Salomon, Roger Williams, Betsy Ross, John Andre, Jefferson, Francis Scott Key, Molly Pitcher, etc.; and comparisons of the heritage of the past with the citizen's present responsibilities and privileges. All the pieces are quite simply but sharply written, although this reader's personal dislike of abstractions and personifications, such as "Miss Democracy" and the "Spirit of the Revolutionary War," naturally leads him to avoid such pageant-like scripts and settle on those plays with straightforward realistic characters as the most desirable scripts. Some of the scripts also will point their moral a bit too obviously for some people's taste, but perhaps children need the obvious and will not be so bothered by this tendency.

All materials are royalty-free. Many can be produced with little or no facilities, although the historical plays can use as elaborate settings as desired. Some attempt at historical costuming should obviously be made to catch the spirit of the past. All in all, because of the great number of scripts and the coverage of so many important ideas and people which are allied with the curriculum and national holidays, this book should be useful to teachers of social studies and dramatics at the elementary and junior high school level.

**THE GIRL FROM SAMOS** by Ida L. Ehrlich. Two-act comedy; Everyman's Theatre, 152 W. 42nd St., New York 18, 5M, 8W; setting: a road between two homes; royalty: \$25.00 first performance, \$20.00 subsequent performances.

From the few extant scenes and fragments of the works of Menander, best known writer of the New Comedy in the latter days of Greek drama, Mrs. Ehrlich has pieced together, adapted, and cleverly contrived a complete play that includes all the important characters Menander is now known to have created. In an excellent introduction the author explains that Menander was a product of his times, reflecting contemporary conditions, such as the low status of women, conquered citizens turned slaves, and the hard lot of a great civilization weakened by war. The story of this play concerns the intertwined relationships of two families of different income brackets, the difficulties of foundlings and slaves in proving their legitimacy and citizenship to secure their human rights, and the power of the heads of households over all who live under their roofs. There are sad and tense moments, as well as

farfical ones, but of course all ends happily with a triple wedding in the offing. The characterization is interestingly individualistic, even in the case of a half-dozen roles that are only bit or one-scene parts. Dialogue fairly well approaches modern vernacular prose and should not be hard for the young actor to make his own.

The setting might be done quite simply, with two facades of houses and an open yard and road between them. Costumes can be rented from Everyman's Theatre, if desired, at the price of \$75.00 for the lot of thirteen for a week—a most reasonable price compared with costs at most regular costume houses. Music for the two songs (by Mrs. Ehrlich) is also available at nominal cost. Groups who want to do something different, a classic that is not too difficult and still entertaining, should read this play.

**CENTRAL AND FLEXIBLE STAGING** by Walden P. Boyle. 1956, University of California Press, 117 pp.

In this small but amply illustrated book may be found the latest conclusions on the recent attempts to escape the picture-frame stage. Now that the thrill of rediscovery of arena staging has somewhat passed into a more sober contemplation of the method, many have discovered that the frequent previous choice of peephole or arena stage is not only no longer

writers are English, with the exception of a few Americans like Max Liebman ("Variety and Television") and Robert Wade ("Design in American Television"), so that the chief value of the book is the complete insight it gives of the BBC, whose comparison with the American broadcasting system is always an interesting speculation. Every phase, program type, job and effect of television broadcasting is discussed by the experts, but usually in very generalized terms. Thus this is not a "practical" book in the sense that a chapter on TV acting presents the theory and rules of acting before the camera; in fact the only detailed and concrete chapter is Mr. Wade's very specific one on designing for TV. But there are other compensations: the dare one say, "typically British"?—chatty descriptions of such exciting events as the televising of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, and the determined conclusions of most of the writers to raise the intellectual and artistic levels of television programming. The teacher should make good use of this book as a source of information on TV in general, and British TV in particular.

**THE MODERN TREASURY OF CHRISTMAS PLAYS**, edited by Lawrence M. Brings. 1955, Denison, 536 pp.

The harried director who each year hunts frantically for a reasonably good Christmas play knows all too well that, after a few tired old



By WILLARD FRIEDERICH

necessary but rarely desirable. Flexible theaters (those that can be easily adapted to proscenium, arena, horseshoe, and other shapes of audience-stage arrangement) are at last answering any and all problems of the director rather than merely some of them. Mr. Boyle, who has had extensive experience at the University of California with a theater than can be rearranged to suit any play and purpose, concisely and clearly demonstrates how such a theater can be devised and used. Although he says nothing about comparative costs of the standard proscenium theater and the flexible theater (with movable chairs placed on movable platforms), it certainly appears plausible that there should be little difference, if any, between the budgets. What is perhaps more important to readers of **DRAMATICS** is that directors who have inadequate proscenium theaters and must—or merely wish—to utilize the gym or cafeteria, etc., for producing their plays can find ample suggestions here as to how to set up both their audience and stage elements. In addition they can further find generalized advice on such problems as choice of plays, use of properties and scenery, costumes and make-up, lighting, acting, and directing. In fact this book seems written primarily for such beginners, for Mr. Boyle spends much time in describing not only the ideal set-up, but particularly the most limited set-ups with which beginners may start. No director should feel free to bemoan his lack of an auditorium from here on, for this book will show him how to have theater if he has no more than a large classroom (30 x 30 feet) at his command. With this he may indeed have a more flexible—and thus more modern and useful—theater than many a director who is saddled with an oversized auditorium that has bad acoustics, sight-lines, or technical equipment.

**TELEVISION IN THE MAKING**, edited by Paul Rotha. 1956, Hastings House, 213 pp.

Although this book was originally published this year in England, it is now being published as another in the Communication Arts Books series. Aside from the introduction and glossary of TV technical terms by Mr. Rotha, it contains twenty personal essays by individual contributors, arranged in three sections: Programmes and Producers, Studios and Services, and The Scope of Television. Virtually all

favorites are run through, there are few good possibilities to choose from. Perhaps this collection of twenty-two one-acts will help make his Christmas season a bit merrier. The plays have casts from five to ten or so, with many possibilities of adding extras and singing groups. Playing times run from twenty-five minutes to around an hour. All are royalty-free with the purchase of copies for each cast member (all at fifty cents each). Ten of the plays concern the Biblical Nativity situation all or in part, so that costumes of that era are quite necessary. The rest are virtually all modern, requiring no special costumes except in a few exceptions, such as the Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. Settings could be just about anything that is available. Most of the plays are realistic in their style of characterization, although a few are somewhat stylized or fantastic. Chief drawbacks in several of the scripts are the ones often found in Christmas materials: occasional awkward attempts at what is thought of as ancient speech of the Nativity era and is really King James Biblical language; sentimentality that can easily cross over into the maudlin if the actors are not careful; and a weakness of plot structure which relies too much on coincidence and miraculous happenstance instead of the strength that comes from people initiating their own situations. Nevertheless many of these plays will be welcomed by directors for other merits they possess, such as their clear-cut emphasis on the Christmas theme and the frequent interest engendered in characters who, according to either history or imagination, might have been involved as minor personalities on the fringes of the great event.

**THE VICARIOUS YEARS** by John van Druten. 1955, Scribners, 187 pp.

An Englishman by birth and an American by adoption, John van Druten writes the story of his early formative years, from childhood to the time of his first achievement as a published author. In this autobiography, which he calls a novel, there is nothing, however, that concerns his somewhat later affiliation with the theater, and admirers of his who love the theater will find the book interesting only as a well-told personal story rather than an insight to his position of one of America's leading dramatists.

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